

COLLECTIONS THAT ARE IN USE: BROADENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF CONSUMERS' COLLECTIONS

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Abstract

The existing literature of collections has previously concentrated only on collections which items are sacred and consequently separated from their original functional purpose. Thus, the literature has neglected many interesting collections, such as those of sneakers, which items are known to remain in their functional use. The aim of this research was to fill this gap in the existing literature by concentrating on moomin mug collections. As moomin mugs have become a significant phenomenon in Finland and as many of their collectors are known to use these collectibles, moomin mug collections were seen as a fruitful context through which to broaden our understanding of consumers' collections. The following research question lead the study: what are collections that are in use and how is the consumption experience of using a collection formed?

The thesis was conducted as a qualitative phenomenological research and its research philosophical assumptions were based on interpretivism. The data of the research was gathered through nine semi-structured interviews and the informants were chosen based on their known possession and usage of moomin mug collections. In addition to interviews, the research data included photos of moomin mug collections. The purpose of the photos was to broaden the researcher's understanding of the research context as well as to support the analysis of the interviews. All together the data included 45 photos.

What was found from the data is that moomin mug collections are in many ways typical collections, as they have similar features with the collections depicted in the existing literature. On the other hand, a significant distinction was that their items were seen to remain in their functional use. The consumption experience of using moomin mug collections was seen to be formed through different logics of usage, which were the following: everyday usage, mood-based usage, seasonal usage, socially based usage, event-based usage as well as non-usage. These logics were found to be dynamic as they were negotiated by the collectors. Specific negotiation was identified between non-usage and the other logics as it was seen to be possible that the collectibles change their status from unused to used and from used to unused. This could happen through rotation or through a sporadic transition. Finally, collectors were also seen to utilize broken items of their collections in creative ways. This was also seen to be forming the consumption experience of using moomin mug collections.

The findings of this research can be seen to broaden our understanding of consumers' collections by highlighting the following aspects: (1) not all collections are sacred and protected from being used. Instead, also the kind of collections exist, which items remain in their original purpose. These types of collections can be an integral part of their owner's life and bring a lot of joy to their everyday situations as well as special occasions. (2) Collections are not necessarily protected from the mundane world by storing them in a special place, as they can also be located in the same place with mundane objects. The chosen place supports the usage of the items. (3) Different kinds of collections exist in the continuum of used and unused collections and finally (4) collections that are in use can be in many ways dynamic, ranging from the dynamicity of their logics of usage to creating new purposes for collectibles that have become broken.

Keywords collections, collections that are in use, possession, moomin mugs

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Kokoelmiin liittyvä kirjallisuus on aiemmin keskittynyt ainoastaan sellaisiin kokoelmiin, joiden osien on ymmärretty olevan pyhiä ja näin ollen erotettuja niiden alkuperäisestä funktionaalisesta käyttötarkoituksesta. Kyseinen kirjallisuus on tästä johtuen jättänyt huomiotta monia mielenkiintoisia kokoelmia, kuten sneakers kokoelmat, joiden esineiden tiedetään pysyvän niille tarkoitettussa käytössä. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli täyttää aikaisemmassa kirjallisuudessa havaittu aukko keskittymällä muumimukikokoelmiin. Koska muumimukit ovat merkittävä ilmiö Suomessa ja useiden keräilijöiden tiedetään käyttävän kyseisiä keräilyesineitä, muumimukikokoelmat nähtiin hedelmällisenä kontekstina, jonka kautta laajentaa kokoelmiin liittyvää ymmärrystä. Seuraava tutkimuskysymys ohjasi tutkimusta: mitä ovat kokoelmat, joita käytetään ja miten niihin liittyvä kulutuskokemus on rakentunut?

Tutkielma toteutettiin kvalitatiivisena fenomenologisena tutkimuksena ja sen tieteenfilosofiset oletukset pohjautuivat interpretivismiin. Tutkimuksen data kerättiin yhdeksän puolistrukturoidun haastattelun kautta ja sen haastateltavat valittiin sen perusteella, että heidän tiedettiin omistavan muumimukeja sekä käyttävän niitä. Haastattelujen lisäksi tutkimuksen data sisälsi valokuvia muumimukikokoelmista. Valokuvien tarkoituksena oli laajentaa tutkijan ymmärrystä tutkimuskontekstista, sekä tukea haastattelujen analyysiä. Tutkimusdata sisälsi yhteensä 45 valokuvaa.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että käytössä olevat kokoelmat ovat monella tapaa tyypillisiä kokoelmia, sillä niihin liittyi monia aikaisemmassa kirjallisuudessa havaittuja kokoelmien piirteitä. Aikaisemmasta kirjallisuudesta poiketen muumimukikokoelmien nähtiin kuitenkin olevan omistajiensa käytössä. Kokoelmien käytön kulutuskokemuksen nähtiin rakentuvan kuuden logiikan kautta, joita olivat arkikäyttö, tunnetilaan liittyvä käyttö, kausittainen käyttö, sosiaalinen käyttö, tapahtumaan liittyvä käyttö, sekä käyttämättömyys. Kyseisten logiikoiden havaittiin olevan dynaamisia, sillä käytetty logiikka vaihtui tilanteen mukaan. Erityistä neuvottelua havaittiin käyttämättömyyden ja muiden logiikoiden välillä, sillä keräilyesineiden huomattiin vaihtavan statustaan käytetystä käyttämättömäksi ja toisin päin. Tämän muutoksen havaittiin tapahtuvan joko rotaation tai satunnaisen muutoksen kautta. Haastateltavien nähtiin lisäksi käyttävän rikkuneita muumimukeja luovasti uusiin käyttötarkoituksiin. Tämä oli osaltaan luomassa muumimukikokoelmien kulutuskokemusta.

Tutkimuksen tulosten voidaan nähdä laajentavan ymmärrystämme kuluttajien kokoelmista korostamalla seuraavia näkökulmia: (1) Kaikki kokoelmat eivät ole pyhiä ja näin ollen suojeltuja käytöltä. Sen sijaan, myös sellaisia kokoelmia on olemassa, joiden esineet säilyvät niiden alkuperäisessä käyttötarkoituksessa. Tällaiset kokoelmat voivat olla merkittävä osa omistajiensa arkea sekä erityisiä tilaisuuksia. (2) kokoelmia ei välttämättä suojella arkiselta maailmalta säilyttämällä niitä erityisesti niille tarkoitettussa paikassa, sillä käytetyt kokoelmat voivat sijaita samassa paikassa arkisten esineiden kanssa. Valittu paikka tukee kokoelman käyttöä. (3) Kokoelmien monimuotoisuus pitäisi nähdä jatkumona käytössä olevien ja käyttämättömien kokoelmien välillä. (4) Kokoelmat, joita käytetään, ovat dynaamisia. Tämä dynaamisuus näkyy käytönlogiikoiden dynaamisuudesta aina rikkiäisten keräilyesineiden käyttämiseen.

Avainsanat kokoelmat, käytössä olevat kokoelmat, omaisuus, muumimukit

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Shedding new light on theory of collections

Our possessions are very important to us consumers. They help us to structure our identity (e.g. Belk 1988, Kleine et al 1992, Ahuvia 2005), form connections with other people (e.g. Banister & Hogg 2004, Ahuvia 2005), understand our past, present, and future (Belk 1988) and basically to live and enjoy our everyday lives as consumers (Kleine et al 1992). Due to their significance in our lives (Belk 1988), it is not a surprise that possessions have been at the interest of consumer researchers for a long period of time.

One specific type of possessions that has gained especially wide interest among consumer researchers is collections. This common phenomenon among contemporary consumers have been studied from various different perspectives extending from brand loyalty (Slater 2000) to consumers' identity (Belk 1988) and because of the large amount of studies on the topic, consumer researchers can be seen to have formed a broad understanding of the different aspects of collections and collecting. What we know about these possessions, for example, is that they are very important to their collectors as they can contain memories from collector's past, symbolize something that a collector would desire to be as well as remind him or her about important social relationships (e.g. Belk 1988, Slater 2000).

However, despite this long tradition of research related to consumers possessions and more specifically to collections, the research stream seems to have neglected the existence of collections, which items remain in use. So far, the studies have only concentrated on collections, which are protected from the mundane everyday world, and among researchers there seems to exist a wide consensus of the key feature of collections. That is, once an item is added into a collection, it gains its sacred status and is consequently separated from its original functional purpose (e.g. Belk et al 1989, Belk et al 1988, Belk 1995b, Long & Schiffman 1997, McKenzie et al 2015, Hughes & Hogg 2006, Spaid 2018, Slater 2000, Pearce 1994, Scaraboto et al 2017). Because of this view, the existing theory can be seen to leave out interesting collections such as those of sneaker collections, which items are known to be in frequent use by their owners.

The aim of this research is to broaden the existing understanding of consumers' possessions by concentrating on collections which items remain in their functional use. To achieve this goal, the research concentrates on the context of moomin mug collections. In recent years moomin mugs have become extremely popular collectibles in Finland and as many collectors use their collections in their everyday lives, they were seen as a fruitful context through which to shed new light on the existing literature of consumers' collections. The research question that is leading the study is the following: what are collections that are in use and how is the consumption experience of using a collection formed?

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The text will next move on to talk about the theoretical background of the thesis. It concentrates on theory related to consumers possessions and explains how collections, which items remain in their functional use, are related to this literature. After the theoretical background the methodology of the research is presented. This section will first describe the context of the research, after which the data collection process, data set, as well as the data analysis process are explained. In the fourth section, the thesis concentrates on the findings of the research, which is followed by discussion in which the findings are further discussed in the light of the existing theory. In addition, theoretical implications, managerial implications, limitations of the research as well as directions for future research are described in the discussion section.

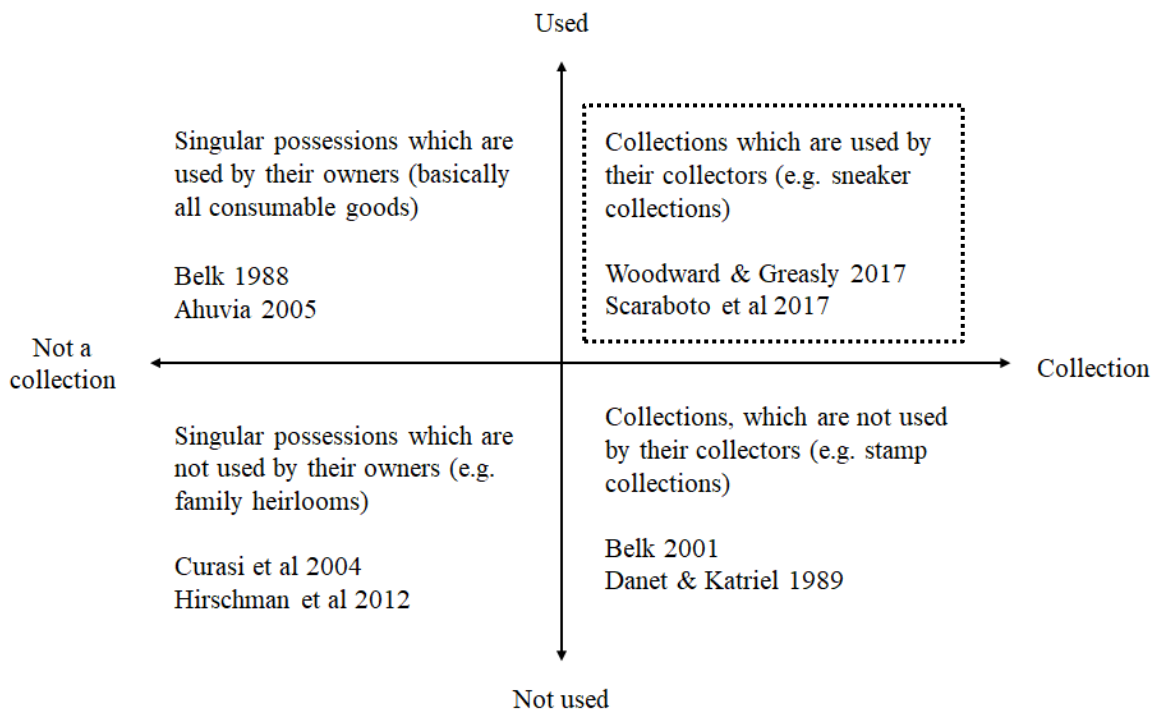
2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview of the theoretical background

In this research, the vast amount of studies on consumers' possessions are divided into used/not used and collection/not a collection axes depicted in figure 1. From these four sections, we already know a lot about singular possessions that are consumed by their owners, singular possessions that are not used by consumers, as well as about sacred collections, which are protected from being used. However, what we don't know much about are collections that are used by their collectors. The literature review of this research starts from singular possessions that are used by their owners and ends by describing what is already known about collections that are used.

Figure 1

Consumers' possessions divided in collection/not a collection and used/not used axes.



NOTE: the research gap in the theory is highlighted with a square

2.2 Singular possessions that are used

The vast majority of possessions of consumers represent items which remain in their functional use. Consequently, things like furniture, cars, deodorants, laptops, back bags, books, toothbrushes, hairdryers, newspapers or any other singular possessions, which are used by consumers, are understood to belong to this quadrant of figure 1. Many of these possessions are strongly related to the everyday activities of consumers and they are typically acquired and disposed depending on what is needed at the time (Kleine et al 1992). Some of these possessions can, however, be more important part of the identity of a consumer than others (Belk 1988, Ahuvia 2005) and typically the ones which are the most important, represent items that consumers love and are very attached to (Ahuvia 2005). On the whole, as most possessions of consumers are used by their owners, this category can be seen to represent the most typical form of consumers' possessions.

2.3 Singular possessions that are not used

In addition to possessions that are normally consumed by their owners, consumers can have singular items which are kept but not used. For example, things like old furniture, clothes, or children's toys, can end up being stored, even though they have not been needed for years (Roster 2001). One reason for consumers to keep such items relates to the believed future value of the possession. For example, children's bikes can be saved for potential future grandchildren or old clothes can be kept with the thought of being able to fit in them after losing weight. (Hirschman et al 2012, Belk 1988) On the other hand, possessions can also be stored, because of the important memories that they contain (Hirschman et al 2012, Roster 2001). These memories can relate, for example, to the roles from which a consumer is departing (Kleine et al 1995) or to consumer's relationships and emotional ties with other people (Roster 2001, Hirschman 2012). However, sometimes the reason for keeping such possessions is just that they have become forgotten (Woodward & Greasley 2017).

In addition to objects which have for one reason or another become needless, consumers can also have possessions, which are so cherished and important that they are thus protected from being used. These types of sacred possessions are very special to their owners as they represent something more than merely their ordinary functional purpose. (Belk et al 1989)

These kinds of objects are treated with passion and respect (Belk et al 1989) and due to their importance, they are also seen to represent an integral part of consumer's extended self (Belk 1988). According to Belk et al (1989), in order to protect these special items and in order to maintain their sacredness, consumers handle them with special care and separate them from the mundane world, for example, by putting them on display.

A good example of such possessions are family heirlooms (Curasi et al 2004, Belk 1989), which are typically transferred from a person of older generations to an heir, who is wished to take good care of the cherished possessions and believed to keep them in the family (Price et al 2000). The sacredness of these items stems from the memories that are related to their previous owners (Belk 1989), as well as from their mysterious past and abilities to support family identities (Curasi et al 2004). Heirlooms have also often high monetary value, which for one's part makes their heirs to protect them from being used (Price 2000). However, even though heirlooms are typically protected from usage, it is also possible that they move into use. An example of such situation is a special family occasion, in which an heirloom is used ritualistically. In addition, it is also possible that heirs alter their heirlooms to better match their style or lifestyle and this way keep them in their personal use. (Türe & Geer 2016)

2.4 Collections that are not used

Collections are typical possessions of contemporary consumers, which is why it is not a surprise that collecting has been researched from various different perspectives. In this research, the vast body of literature about collections and collecting is seen to relate to the collection/not used section depicted in figure 1. This is because this discussion has widely accepted Belk's (1995a, 67) definition of collecting, which brings out how the collected items are "removed from ordinary use" once they are added into a collection (e.g. Belk et al 1989, Belk et al 1988, Belk 1995b, Long & Schiffman 1997, McKenzie et al 2015, Hughes & Hogg 2006, Spaid 2018, Slater 2000, Pearce 1994, Scaraboto et al 2017). Based on the review of the literature, eight important features of these types of collections were identified.

The first feature relates to the incidental start of collections. Based on the existing literature, *the first item of these types of collections is typically a gift from a friend or a family member, an inherited item, or just a lucky find* that has somehow aroused the interest of a consumer

(Belk 2001, Belk et al 1988). Consequently, it is understood that collectors rarely make a preplanned decision on what to collect, but instead typically realize their behavior a long after it has already begun (Belk et al 1988).

Secondly, despite the possible incidental start of a collection, the way new items are added into it later on, is an active and selective activity. This is because it is typical for collectors to make careful decisions on whether or not certain items fit their collection and to add only those items, which are seen to bring it closer to completions (Belk 2001). This selectiveness follows *the rule of “no two alike”*, which means that all of the items in a collection, have to be somehow different from each other (Danet & Katriel 1989, 262). In some cases, collectors are reported to have duplicates of some of their items, but instead of them belonging to the collection, they are sold, traded with other collectors (Long & Schiffman 1997, Danet & Katriel 1989), treated as ordinary commodities (Long & Schiffman 1997) or used as spare pieces in case the other item becomes damaged (Danet & Katriel 1989).

Thirdly, in addition to the rule of no two alike, collected *items need to belong to a certain category* in order for them to be comprehended as a collection. This means that as the collectibles need to be different from each other, they should also be somehow interrelated (Danet & Katriel 1989). Based on the existing literature, a collection can concentrate, for example, on a broad superordinate category of items (e.g. on beer cans) or on a certain subcategory (e.g. on a certain beer brand). However, according to Belk (2001) ordinary consumption objects that belong to a certain category and set (e.g. spices that are used for cooking) are not theoretically comprehended as a collection, if their primary function is in everyday use.

As described earlier, a fourth important feature of these types of collections is that once an item becomes a part of a collection, it becomes *“sacred” and thus separated from the ordinary everyday consumption* (Belk et al 1989). Consequently, collected items stop serving their original functional purposes and are, instead, valued due to their aesthetical features, after they are added into a collection (Danet & Katriel 1989, Belk et al 1989). For example, an individual who collects toy cars, doesn't buy them in order to play with them, but instead to admire them as a part of his/her collection. According to Belk (2001) the only times when a collector might be seen to use his or her collectibles is on a very special occasion, in which case the collected items are handled with extreme care and caution. An

example of such occasion is a parade, in which collectors of old cars can drive and show their vehicles (Belk 2001).

The fifth identified feature of these collections relates to their completion. According to the existing literature *collectors both strive to complete their collections and at the same time fear that they actually become complete*. The reason for this fear is that collecting is found to be such a big part of one's identity that collectors fear to lose a part of themselves, if the beloved activity comes to an end (Belk 1988). Therefore, collectors can start to adopt different strategies, in order to prevent the completion of the collection. One such strategy is to develop higher requirements for the items that are added into the collection. Collectors can, for example, start to collect only those items, that are in perfect physical condition, or some other way redefine the category in which they are concentrating on. Another option is to start collecting items that are somehow in relation to the initial collection or just to concentrate on a totally new category of items. (Belk et al 1988a)

On the other hand, there are also many different strategies for completing a collection. In their research, Danet and Katriel (1989, 266) recognized five different strategies that collectors can use when attempting to achieve completion: collectors can try to (1) fill a space in a collection (e.g. fill an empty space in a folder of stamps), (2) complete a certain set of items, (3), create a display of items that is visually satisfying, (4) collect only small or large items, or finally to (5) collect perfect objects, such as items that are physically in mint condition or items that are aesthetically perfect. Interestingly, based on the existing theory, the acquisition of perfect items can be used to both postpone the completion as well as to achieve completion of a collection.

Sixth feature that was identified based on the literature review relates to the storage of collections. Based on the existing theory, collectors separate their collections from the mundane everyday world by *displaying them in a special place*, which is meant specifically for the collectibles. This place is typically like a shrine for the collection and it has often a central place in collector's home (e.g. a glassdoor cabinet in collector's living room). (Belk et al 1989) According to McKenzie et al (2015) the size of the collection and the size of the collected items affect greatly the place that is chosen for displaying a collection. The lack of space, on the other hand, can cause frustration in a collector, if the beloved items are not displayed the way he or she thinks is appropriate for them (McKenzie 2015).

The seventh feature that was identified relates to rituals that are associated with collections. In addition to displaying a collection, collectors often *arrange, label, show off, and caress their collections* (Belk et al 1989). According to McCracken (1989, 79), through these kinds of “possession rituals” consumers indicate their ownership of their possession as well as strive to transfer the magical positive aspects of the items into themselves. These rituals are common among all consumers (McCracken 1986), but when it comes to collectors, they typically execute them in a more elaborate and passionate manner (Belk et al 1989).

Finally, as the careful displaying and nurturing of the items show, *collections are very special to their collectors*. This is not only because of the time and effort that is invested in creating and taking care of a collection, but also because they represent a part of collector’s extended self (Belk 1988). A collection can represent the personal history of its collector, symbolize collector’s relationships with his or her loved ones, or work as an evidence of one’s collecting skills. It is also common for collections to symbolize something what their collectors would like to be. (Belk et al 1988) Because of all of these special meanings, collectibles are seen to be fragile objects that need to be protected and taken a good care of (Belk 2001).

2.5 Collections that are used

Despite the vast amount of studies about collections and collecting, specific research on collections that are constantly used by their collectors is non-existent. This is interesting given that these types of collections clearly exist. For example, sneaker collectors, who wear different shoes from their collections on a daily basis, have become common all around the world (Vatanen 2017) and due to the popularity of the phenomenon, they have been widely noticed by the popular press. For example, in Finland, papers such as Helsingin Sanomat (e.g. Vainio 2018) and Ilta-Sanomat (e.g. Kostiainen 2017) have written about this craze among consumers. Given this evidence of collections that are used by their collectors, it is odd that they have not been recognized by consumer researchers.

Only couple of studies have talked about such collections. One of these studies is that of Scaraboto’s et al (2017, 220), which brings out how all kinds of wearable and consumable collections like those of “shoes, clothing, fashion accessories, and other wearables” can

somewhat remain in their functional use. They themselves concentrated on Melissa shoe collectors and found out, for example, that due to the frequent use of their Melissa shoes, their informants had weekly cleaning rituals, during which they removed dirt and marks from their collectibles. In addition to cleaning, they were seen to dispose some of their Melissa shoes, if they had become too worn-out, as well as to place their collectibles in different places in the house depending on whether they were going to be cleaned, displayed, or used. On the whole, it became clear from their research that Melissa shoes are continually in use, which is why it is interesting that Scaraboto et al (2017, 220) stated that wearable collectibles “are somewhat, but not completely removed from their original functional capacities”.

Another researcher to talk about the everyday usage of collections, is that of Woodward’s and Greasly’s (2017). Their research concentrated on CD and clothing collections and it brought out how they can be “the site for everyday consumption practices as well as the locus of memories” (p. 659). However, instead of considering them as collections, Woodward and Greasly (2017) defined them as “assemblages” which can be part of the everyday life of their owners as well as contain all kinds of entities such as other objects and people. For example, based on their study, a clothing assemblage can include its owner, wardrobe, clothes, and dust.

In addition of containing different entities, Woodward and Greasly (2017) explained how assemblages are dynamic in a way that they can include items that are old, new, frequently used, rarely used, or items that are not used at all. According to their findings, the frequency in use can relate to the way items are arranged. For example, clothes that are in the front of a wardrobe can become used the most due to their convenient location. Items that were not used, on the other hand, were either forgotten, or they contained precious memories, which is why consumers wanted to keep them, instead of disposing them (an example of such clothes could be a wedding dress or pregnancy clothes). (Woodward & Greasly 2017)

These findings bring out interesting information related to the usage of sets of items, but as Woodward and Greasly (2017) themselves brought out, CD and clothing collections are more of assemblages rather than collections. When thinking about clothes, for example, consumers rarely concentrate on a certain clothing brand and even those consumers, who love to buy new clothes frequently, can be seen to represent more of fashion enthusiasts rather than clothing collectors. Also, often times the rule of no-two-alike doesn’t apply to

clothes as they are not bought because of the way they add something to the completion of a set, but, for example, because of necessity (e.g. typically consumers have more than one pair of white socks). Similar to clothes, CD collections can be seen to tell more about consumers' enthusiasm and interest in certain type of music rather than their interest in collecting the physical CD's per se. Consequently, as CDs or clothes can't really be seen as collections, even the research of Woodward and Greasley (2017) doesn't fill the gap in the existing literature.

As the examples above show, collections that are used by their collectors exist but due to the lack of comprehensive research and theorization they cannot be fully understood. This research aims to fill this gap in the consumer research literature by concentrating on moomin mug collections, which are known to be used by their collectors. More specifically, the aim of this research is to understand collections, which items are known to remain in their original functional purpose.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Context of the study: moomin mug collections

Moomin mugs, which represent the context of this research, are one of the most popular moomin products in Finland. The moomin characters that are depicted in the moomin mugs were created by the famous Finnish author and painter Tove Jansson and they were first seen in Jansson's moomin books already in 1945 (Leppänen 2014). From those years the moomin characters have extended from books and comics to Tv-programs, movies, theme parks, and consumer goods (Leppänen 2014), and over time they have become an important and integral part of the Finnish culture (see a picture of moomin characters in figure 2).

Figure 2

A picture of moomin characters (Moomin.com 2019)



Moomin mugs are produced under a Finnish ceramics brand Arabia, which is currently owned by a Finnish consumer goods company Fiskars (Arabia 2019). The moomin pictures of the moomin mugs are drawn by Tove Slotte based on the illustrations of Moomin books and comics of Tove Jansson. (Leppänen 2014) The production and design of moomin mugs started in the 90s and up to now a total of 94 different moomin mugs have been produced (Arabia 2019). Nowadays moomin mugs can be found from almost every single Finnish home and in recent years they have also become extremely popular collectibles in Finland (Leppänen 2014). The most frantic collectors are willing to pay thousands of euros in order

to acquire the rarest moomin mugs (e.g. Kiviniemi 2019) and, for example, in 2018 hundreds of Finns were ready to line up for hours in order to ensure getting a limited edition Moomin's day mug (Välimaa 2018, Niemistö 2018). What also tells something about the size of the phenomenon is how the popular Moomin collectors -Facebook group has over 19 500 members at the time of writing this research and how, according to Kaleva's article (Puukka 2018), on 9th of August 2018, moomin mugs were searched 131 times a minute in Tori.fi (Tori.fi is a marketplace for buyers and sellers).

In addition of being a remarkable phenomenon, moomin mug collections have a distinctive feature compared to other collections, which is why they were seen as a context that could broaden the current understanding of collections. Like mentioned before many of these collections are not protected from being used but are instead frequently used by their collectors. Because of this feature, moomin mug collections were seen as a fruitful context in which to study the usage of collections.

3.2 Research approach

The research was conducted through the lens of interpretivism in an attempt to form an understanding of the phenomenon of moomin mug collections. Interpretivism is an epistemological orientation, which is typically used in qualitative research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2011). Based on the assumptions underlying interpretivism, this research sees the reality as socially constructed, diverse, and contextual (Hudson & Ozanne 1988). Consequently, it is understood that all of the informants of the study experience and comprehend the reality in their own particular ways and that these experiences and understanding are tied into the specific context of the research; that is the moomin mug collections. This means that the knowledge that is generated through this study is understood to be dependent on this specific context (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2011).

Furthermore, the research was conducted through the qualitative research method of phenomenology. In phenomenological research the researcher is interested in gaining insight from the essence of a certain phenomenon and the individual experiences of people experiencing the phenomenon (Thompson et al 1989). As the aim of this research is to form a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of collections that are used and more

specifically the features of the consumption experience of their usage, phenomenology was seen as a suitable research method to reach the aim of this study.

3.3 Data collection and the data set

The data was gathered through semi-structured interviews. This method was seen as the most suitable way for studying the unexplored topic of collections that are used, as it helps the interviewer to keep the conversation on relevant topics, but on the other hand allows the informants to talk about the researched phenomenon in their own terms (Hirsijärvi & Hurme 2015). Consequently, semi-structured interviews were understood to give the interviews both focus and enough flexibility, in order for the researcher to form a good understanding of the unstudied topic.

In order to gather comprehensive data of the research context, nine interviews were conducted. The first interview was conducted in the fall 2018 and its purpose was to help the researcher to specify the angle of the research as well as to form a relevant interview framework. Rest of the interviews were conducted in the spring 2019. The informants were selected based on their known possession and usage of moomin mugs and they were found either from the circle of acquaintances of the researcher or from the Moomin collectors - Facebook group. Two of the informants were men and six of them were women. This was seen to reflect well the gender division of moomin mug collectors based on the members of moomin mug related Facebook groups.

seven of the interviews were conducted at informants' homes. This was seen to allow a distraction-free environment for the interview (Arsel 2017) as well as the possibility for the informants to show their collections to the interviewer. Similar way as in the research of Shankar et al (2009) the presence of the moomin mug collections were seen to help the informants to talk about their collections and to memorize details that they otherwise might not have remembered. This arrangement made it also easier for the researcher to gain better understanding of what kind of moomin mugs informants' collections contained, how the collections were stored as well as to better comprehend what kind of features their consumption included. In addition to the interviews conducted at interviewees homes, two of the informants were interviewed via phone, as it was the preferred method of these informants.

Each of the interviews started with opening questions, which were related to the interviewees' background. The goal of these questions was to form understanding of the informants' background as well as to create a relaxed atmosphere that would help the informant to share his or her thoughts and experiences related to the moomin mug collection (Arsel 2017). Other questions that were covered during the interviews related to informants' moomin mug collections. The interview questions were formed in a way that they gave the informants space to talk about their collection in their own terms. For example, the interviewer didn't mention the words "collector" or "collection" during the interview, but they were instead naturally brought up by the informants during the conversation. In addition, the follow up questions were always formed based on the terms used by the informant (see Thompson et al 1989). This way the researcher was able to ensure the quality of the data and to avoid leading the conversation based on her own preliminary perceptions.

All of the interviews were recorded by using a phone's recording application and their duration varied from 36 minutes to 2 hours 17 minutes resulting in the average duration of 66 minutes. Summary of the conducted interviews and the informants can be found from table 1. The names of the informants are presented as pseudonyms, in order to ensure the anonymity of the interviewees.

Table 1
Information of the interviews

Name	Age and gender	Number of mugs	Place	Time	Duration
Saara	Mid 40s, F	60	Pori	4.10.2018	40min
Emma	Early 20s, F	over 80	Pori	18.1.2019	57min
Paula	Early 50s, F	81	Pori	19.1.2019	65min
Maria	Early 50s, F	72	Pori	20.1.2019	59min
Elli	Early 30s, F	32	Jyväskylä	23.1.2019	36min
Jarkko	Early 40s, M	89	Jyväskylä	18.2.2019	137min
Anssi	Mid 20s, M	40	Kerava	25.2.2019	40min
Minna	Late 30s, F	over 200 mugs	Hämeenkyrö*	7.3.2019	61min
Niina	Late 20s, F	45	Joensuu*	19.3.2019	36min

NOTE: *Interview conducted via phone; F=female, M=male

In addition to interviews, photos of moomin mug collections were included in the data. These included photos taken by the interviewer, photos sent by the informants, as well as photos found from the Moomin collectors -Facebook group. The purpose of these photos was to help the researcher to remember the special features of each collection of the informants as well as to form a comprehensive idea of the research phenomenon. The pictures also supported the analysis of the transcriptions by providing extra information of moomin mug collections. All of the informants were asked for permission to take photos of their collections as well as to include the taken pictures into the research paper. Permission to use photos found from the Facebook group was also asked from the members who had posted them in the group. All together the data included 45 photos.

3.4 Data analysis

In the beginning of the analysis the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, after which they were read through several times in order to form a good understanding of the content of each interview. To deepen this gained preliminary understanding of the informants' subjective thoughts and experiences, memos were written to describe each of the interviews (see Lempert 2007). The main idea of the memos was to work as a mean for the researcher to generate ideas and to identify categories from the data (Lempert 2007). In addition to memos, the researcher created mind maps to reflect each of the interviews. The mind maps contained all of the main features that came up from each interview, and their goal was to help the researcher to comprehend the overall picture of the transcriptions.

With the help of the memos and mind maps the data was coded into themes through emergent coding. This means that instead of using a predefined theoretical framework, the themes emerged straight from the data. More specifically, the coding was done by reading and comparing the memos and the mind maps to each other and by this way identifying similarities and differences from the interviews. The identified themes were then divided into more abstract and general categories as well as viewed critically in order to ensure that they provide a coherent picture of the researched phenomenon. (see Spiggle 1994) What has to be highlighted is that instead of being a linear process, the data analysis procedure of this research was circular in nature. This means that the researcher went back and forth with

different phases in the analysis in order to form a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and themes (see Eriksson & Kovalainen 2011).

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Understanding moomin mugs as collections

Based on the interviews, instead of being just sets of items, informants' moomin mugs were clearly collections. This came out from the way it was important for the collectors that all of the moomin mugs were different from each other (the rule of no-two-alike) and that they were specific Arabia's Teema moomin mugs (they had to belong to the same category) (Danet & Katriel 1989). It also became clear that the collectors were trying to achieve completion of their collection either by acquiring all of the different moomin mugs or by buying all of those mugs that they found appealing. For example, one of the informants, Emma, had bought a moomin mug book, in which she had marked all the different moomin mugs that her collection was still missing. Also, similar to the existing literature, many of the informants had received their first moomin mug as a gift. (Belk 2001)

However, in addition to these features typical for all collections, one feature that made the informants' collections distinctive is that all of the informants were using their moomin mug collections. A reason that seemed to justify this usage is that almost all of the informants represented consumers, who primarily valued the usability of objects. This came out, for example, from Maria's interview, as she explained how the use of her moomin mugs has brought her lot of practical joy.

“You could probably put your money in a worse thing than this. At least there's something that can be used. Even though I have spent a lot of money on these, they have brought lot of joy. Everyday practical joy. That is the positive thing. If you collect coffee grinders or drinkers next to the walls, well they can of course be a viewing experience, but they don't necessarily bring you more joy than that. These bring practical joy.” (Maria)

As it comes out from Maria's citation, she thinks that her moomin mugs have been worth the money she has spent on them. This is because she has been able to use her moomin mugs in her everyday life and because they have consequently brought her lot of practical joy. This

indicates that the importance of her moomin mugs doesn't stem merely from their ownership, but from the fact that they can be used. This becomes clear also from the way Maria talks about coffee grinders and drinkers, which in her opinion don't bring much joy, if they are only put on display. By saying this, Maria differentiates her moomin mug collection from those collections, which are not used and suggests that they don't bring as much happiness to their owners as do her moomin mug collection which is in everyday use.

Figure 3

Moomin mug collection were typically stored in the kitchen



NOTE: Paula's moomin mug collection in her kitchen's cabinet (left), Elli's moomin mug collection on the kitchen wall (right).

Also, the good quality of the moomin mugs seemed to be an important reason, why the informants dared to use their moomin mug collections. Many of the informants described how moomin mugs are durable objects and how they are nice and easy to use. For example, Maria, who talked about the practical joy of her moomin mugs in the previous citation, explained also how they are convenient to use.

“The size of the mugs is suitable, and they fit well your hand. They are also easy to keep clean and they don't break easily. Not many of them have become broken. Maybe two or three... But these are like multi-purpose mugs. They can

be used as coffee mugs or juice mugs or milk mugs. They are multi-use and easy to use mugs.” (Maria)

In the citation above, Maria brings out how moomin mugs are good and practical in use. They fit well one’s hand, they are durable and easy to keep clean, and they are suitable for all kinds of usage such as juice or coffee drinking. All of these qualities seem to support the reason why Maria wants to keep her moomin mug collection in use.

In addition of being in use, it seemed to be typical for moomin mug collections to be stored in the informants’ kitchens. For example, Paula explained how she keeps her mugs in her kitchen cabinet.

“They are stored in the kitchen cabinet and like I mentioned they are all in use. They are not in a showcase or in a thing like that. These are meant to be used.” (Paula)

As it comes out from Paula’s citation, she highlights that her moomin mugs are not kept in a showcase and consequently only meant for viewing. Instead, they are kept in her kitchen cabinet, because they are meant to be used. The location of the mugs can be seen to support the usage of the collection, as they are most often used as well as washed in the kitchen.

In addition to keeping mugs in a kitchen cabinet one of the informants, Emma, was seen to keep her collection on her kitchen wall. The reason for this storage solution was that it is easier to choose a mug for usage from the wall, as you can see all the options. She also mentioned how the mugs form a nice colorful spot in her decoration. Similar to Paula’s storage solution, keeping one’s mugs on the kitchen wall can be seen to support the usage of the collection. In addition, it enables their viewing as part of the home’s decoration at the same time.

Two of the informants were also seen to rotate their moomin mugs between a showcase and a kitchen cabinet. This storage solution will be explained in detail later. Next the text will concentrate more thoroughly on the usage of the moomin mug collections.

4.2 Logics of usage

Like mentioned above, in contrast to the existing theory on collecting (e.g. Belk et al 1989 and Danet & Katriel 1989), all of the informants explained how they constantly use their moomin mugs. Based on their interviews, it was possible to identify six different logics of usage, which the informants applied, when using their collections. These included everyday usage, mood-based usage, seasonal usage, socially based usage, event-based usage as well as non-usage. Findings related to these logics will next be explained.

4.2.1 Everyday usage

The informants of this study didn't separate their moomin mug collections from everyday mundane world, as was the case with collectors in Belk's et al (1989) research. Instead, almost all of the interviewees explained how their moomin mugs are constantly being used for casual and habitual tea, milk, juice, water or coffee drinking and how they are consequently an important and integral part of their everyday life. For example, Jarkko described how his moomin mugs are an important part of his morning coffee routine.

“They are like an important thing. When I wake up in the morning, it would not come to my mind to drink coffee from an any other mug. They are always in use, just always. There is no such moment, when we don't have a moomin mug on our kitchen counter or in the dishwasher.” (Jarkko)

Jarkko explained how his moomin mugs are not separated from use or saved only for special occasions. Instead, they are in constant everyday use, which seemed to be the very reason why they are important to him. He explained, for example, how he could not think of drinking his morning coffee from an any other mug than a moomin mug, which indicates that his moomin mugs are an important part of his daily routine. On the other hand, what also came out from Jarkko's interview is that despite the importance of the moomin mugs, they can be put on the kitchen counter or washed in the dishwasher. This illustrates how the mugs of his collection, are not cleaned or handled with similar kind of extreme manner as collectibles of sacred collections (Belk's et al 1989). Instead, they can be washed in the dishwasher or kept on a counter similar way as any other dishes.

4.2.2 Mood based usage

Based on the existing theory, consumer's mood is understood to have a great effect on individuals' consumption behavior. Consumers can, for example, engage in positive activities in order to prolong their good mood or they can do or buy things with positive attributes, in order to get rid of unpleasant feelings. (Kacen 1994) The use of moomin mugs was no exception to this, as almost all of the informants described how their mood can have an effect on their decision of which moomin mug to use in a certain moment. For example, Jarkko gave an example of a situation, when he can choose to use a certain moomin mug in order to aspire a better mood.

“It's like, if I want to cheer myself up, I just walk in front of the mugs and I choose the one, which makes me feel happier. For example, this mug here (shows a yellow moomin mug). If it's a gray autumn day, this one makes me feel good.” (Jarkko)

Jarkko explains in the citation how he can cheer himself up on a gray autumn day by choosing a yellow moomin mug, which makes him feel good. It can be interpreted that his bright-colored moomin mug makes it possible for him to turn his attention into something positive and, thus, eliminate negative feelings. Consequently, the use of the yellow moomin mug seems to work as a way for him to overcome an unpleasant mood.

In addition of overcoming negative feelings, informants brought up how they can choose a moomin mug, which reflects their current mood. For example, Maria explained how she always chooses a moomin mug, based on how she is feeling.

“If you're in a bad mood, you can take a Stinky mug or a Groke mug...And when you're in a happier mood you can find anything from here or, for example, a Little My mug. That red Little My is like when you're having like a...puckish day or like the kind of day that you could not care less, but you still have to do something or to come up with some tricks. That Little My is that kind of lovely mug.” (Maria)

The moomin characters seem to play an important role, when Maria chooses a suitable moomin mug to reflect her current mood. If she is in a bad mood, she chooses a mug which has a picture of a trouble causing character such as Stinky or Groke. On the other hand, if she is feeling happy or “puckish” as she describes in the quotation, she can choose to use a moomin mug which has a picture of Little My. As Little My’s character is very puckish and she likes to come up with tricks in the moomin series, it reflects well Maria’s description of the mood in which she wants to use the Little My mug.

When reflecting this behavior on existing theory on mood-based consumption, it can be interpreted that the choice of a happier moomin mug, when experiencing a happy mood, can be a way for Maria to prolong her positive state of mind (Kacen 1994). Her habit of using a negative moomin mug, when in a bad mood is, instead, interestingly not in line with the existing theory, which suggests that individuals strive to eliminate negative feelings with positive things and behavior (Schwarz & Clore 1983). On this account, Maria’s way to use a moomin mug, which reflects her negative mood, can be interpreted as her way to handle and explore negative feelings, rather than a way to get rid of them.

An interesting exception to previous informants, who explained how they choose a mug based on how they are feeling in a certain moment, is Emma, who described that she is always feeling the same. She is always feeling like Little My and because of that she always uses her yellow Little My mug.

“I’m always feeling like Little My. Always in a way. I think that I’m like brisk and raffish and that. At least I try to be like that every day and somehow, I think that this Little My like cheers me up. And this yellow color is quite perky, so it probably also has an effect.” (Emma)

As it comes out from the citation, also Emma chooses the moomin mug that she wants to use based on how she is feeling. However, the difference to other informants is that Emma is always feeling the same, which is why she is always using the same moomin mug. She is always trying to be in the Little My mood and that is why her yellow Little My mug works as a way for her to stay in the right state of mind. On the other hand, if she for some reason is not feeling brisk and raffish like Little My, the mug cheers her up and helps her to attain the right mood. Based on Emma’s extract, it can be interpreted that she identifies herself

strongly with Little My's character. This comes out from the way she describes how she likes to think herself as having similar qualities with Little My's character.

4.2.3 Seasonal usage

Many of the informants brought out, how they use their moomin mugs based on the season of the year. For example, Paula explained how she prefers to use different moomin mugs during different seasons.

"I have now been using this winter's winter mug. I think that it is very pretty because of the picture of snowfall. I have now been using it for a quite a long time...And this one is a nice spring like mug, which has a spring theme. I think that this probably stands out again, when spring comes and when the amount of light starts to increase. And from the newer mugs this one is quite nice. This is the one, which I used the most in the fall (shows a purple colored moomin mug with a picture of sea scenery)." (Paula)

It comes out from Paula's citation that the season of the year affects her moomin mug usage. In autumn she had used her purple colored moomin mug the most and at the time of the interview in January, she preferred to use a winter-themed moomin mug. She also assumed that when spring comes, she will start using a spring-themed moomin mug. Based on this logic, the mugs that Paula prefers to use during different seasons, have become chosen because of the way they reflect the ongoing season: the winter-themed mug reflects clearly winter and the spring-themed moomin mug reflects the spring season. However, in the case of the purple mug, which Paula said to use in the fall, the relationship between the season and the picture of the mug is not as clear. It can be interpreted that Paula has chosen the mug, because it reminds her of fall or because to her it is able to create a fall-like feeling.

On the whole, it can be interpreted that this kind of seasonal usage is a way for Paula to bring variety to her everyday life. This is because instead of using the same mugs all the time, the mug that she is using is always changing based on the season. On the other hand, this type of usage can also be seen to ease Paula's everyday decision-making process. By choosing a certain mug that reflects the ongoing season, she limits the amount of options from which to choose from.

What also came out from the interviews is that not only singular moomin mugs can become chosen based on the season of the year, but also the whole order of the collection can be changed based on the ongoing season. One of the informants, who talked about this practice, was Saara.

“So, when it’s summer, I put these summerlike mugs in the front and I move these mugs in the cupboard, so that we would not always use the same ones...And these are, for example, winterlike mugs, and these I will soon move to the front, because we always use those ones that are in the front.” (Saara)

The way Saara changes the order of her moomin mugs reflects the ongoing season of the year. If it is summer, she puts summerlike moomin mugs in the front of the cupboard, and when winter comes, she starts using her winter moomin mugs. For example, at the time of her interview in October, she was planning to move the summer moomin mugs aside and put her winter mugs in the front. Similar to Paula, this practice can be interpreted as a way for Saara to seek variety in her everyday life. This comes out from the way she talks about avoiding the usage of the same moomin mugs all the time. It can also be interpreted that by using the moomin mugs based on the season of the year, it is easier for Saara to make the decisions of which mug to choose from the large collection.

4.2.4 Socially based usage

The previous logics represented more of the individualistic usage of the moomin mugs, but based on the interviews, their usage has also a social aspect. Informants explained how they constantly share their moomin mugs with family members, and how their mugs are an integral part of the coffee moments with their guests. Elli, for example, explained how she lets her guests choose their own moomin mug, when they come to visit her, and how she also asks them to validate their mug choice. Elli demonstrated this practice also in the beginning of her interview, as she let the interviewer to pick a moomin mug from her collection and asked her to explain, why she had chosen the specific mug. This practice came out also from the following citation.

“We have the habit of doing our friends so that they have to choose their own moomin mug from these and after that they have to explain why they have chosen the specific mug. Just like you had to do.” (Elli)

This practice of letting the guests choose their moomin mugs and asking them to validate their choice is clearly an important part of the guests visit for Elli. It can be seen as a fun activity, which helps to create a relaxed atmosphere among the guests and the hostess in the beginning of the visit. In addition, the validation of one's choice makes everyone aware of others' thoughts and feelings in the moment, which is why it can also work as a fun and easy way for Elli to make the conversation flowing with the guests. Consequently, moomin mugs seem to be a way for her to create a smooth and relaxed start for the social interaction with her guests.

In addition to letting others choose their own moomin mugs, some of the informants explained how they can be the one to choose a mug for another person. For example, Saara explained how she always ponders, which mug to give, if she gives someone else a moomin mug. Moomin characters appeared to be an important factor in her decision-making process.

“If I give someone a mug, I choose which one I give. If I have been fighting with my husband, I give him a Groke mug or a Stinky mug...and I have a friend, who is a class teacher and she is quite strict, so I always give her a Fillyjonk mug. She has probably not even realized that I always give her that mug.” (Saara)

As Saara explains in the citation, if she has been fighting with her husband, she gives him a moomin mug, which has a picture of Groke or Stinky. Groke and Stinky are the unpleasant characters of the moomin stories, which is why it seems that by giving her husband a moomin mug with a picture of this kind of negative character, Saara shows her negative feelings related to the fight. On the other hand, this gesture can also be interpreted as a way for Saara to playfully make up with her husband after an argument. This is because even though the character of the mug indicates her negative feelings, the gesture of giving a mug itself shows that she is willing to forget the fight. Based on this, moomin mugs seem to be a way for Saara to handle negative social situations in her family.

In the same citation Saara explains how she always gives her strict friend a Fillyjonk mug. As Fillyjonk is a strict character in the moomin series, it seems that Saara wants to give her friend a moomin mug that matches with her friend's personality. Also, as Saara brought out that her friend has probably not realized that she always gives her a Fillyjonk mug, it appears that Saara has not told her friend about the mug choice. Therefore, it seems that by always giving her friend a Fillyjonk mug and not mentioning the reason for it, Saara amuses herself with the expense of her friend during the friend's visit.

Even though the informants explained how they share their moomin mugs with others, some of them also brought out how they don't give moomin mugs to guests, if they know that they don't like moomins. For example, Maria explained how she has friends to whom she would not give moomin mugs, when they come to visit her.

“But I also understand if someone doesn't want to have (a moomin mug). For example, I know that some of our friends want to drink their coffee from a coffee cup and then I'll give them a coffee cup. It would not come to my mind to ask that person that would you like to drink your coffee from this, when I know that she doesn't want to drink coffee from a mug and especially not from a moomin mug...Now that I have learned to know it, then of course...And not everybody has to like these. That has to be respected.” (Maria)

Maria brought out how she would not serve coffee to a friend from a moomin mug, if she knows that the friend doesn't like moomins or that he or she prefers to drink coffee from a cup. Based on the quotation, Maria seems to understand that not everybody likes moomin mugs, and that she wants to respect that opinion. This indicates that even though she herself would like to serve coffee from them to her friends, she is willing to make an exception, when she knows that someone is not a fan of moomins. By doing this she shows her respect to her friends.

In addition to the things mentioned above, the social aspect of moomin mugs came up also from the way certain mugs were not used, because they were seen to belong to someone else in the family. This came up, for example, from Saara's husband's quotation, in which he explained that he doesn't use a Moominmamma mug.

Saara's husband: There is this Moominmamma mug. I have never drunk from that mug. It just doesn't belong to me, no. I always check that I don't pick that one. Otherwise I don't really care, which mug I choose.

Saara: He's talking about this red Moominmamma mug. But yea, if you choose a mug to yourself, you probably prefer to take Moominpappa mug instead.

Saara's husband explained how he doesn't want to use the Moominmamma mug, because he thinks that it doesn't belong to him. The reason for this can be seen to relate to Moominmamma's character, which represents the kind and caring mother figure in the moomin series. It can be interpreted that because Saara's husband represents the father role in their family, he doesn't identify himself with Moominmamma's character and consequently avoids using the Moominmamma mug. He, instead, links it with the mother's role of her wife and consequently thinks that the mug belongs to her and not to him. Based on Saara's comment he, instead, prefers to use a mug, which has a picture of Moominpappa, who represents the father figure in the moomin series. Consequently, it seems that by avoiding the usage of the Moominmamma mug and by preferring the Moominpappa mug Saara's husband reflects his role as a father in the family. Thus, it can be interpreted that also the family roles can be reflected and negotiated through the usage of moomin mug collections.

4.2.5 Event based usage

Based on the interviews, moomin mugs were not only seen as everyday objects as almost all of the informants described how they had used their collections also in special occasions. Informants mentioned events such as birthday parties, Christmas celebrations, christening parties, Mother's and Father's Day celebrations, and graduation parties, in which their moomin mugs had been part of. In the following citation Elli brings out how her moomin mug collection was used even in her wedding.

"Well, for example, our wedding comes to my mind. Our wedding was at Rami's mum's and her partner's place and it was basically a garden party in Lappeenranta. It was in the summer two years ago. We borrowed some moomin mugs from Rami's mom and from my mom to complement my moomin

mug collection. We had something like forty-five guests and somehow these just suited that party so well too. In my opinion these bring warmth to a normal everyday table, coffee table, and party table. In parties it is not just dry and official. These make them a little more relaxed” (Elli)

As it comes out from Elli’s citation, she doesn’t categorize her moomin mugs strictly as mundane objects or as dishes that are saved only for special occasions. Instead, she thinks that moomin mugs are suitable for all kinds of situations from everyday context to special events such as her own wedding. The reason for this seems to be the way moomin mugs, in her opinion, are able to create a warm and relaxed atmosphere to those situations in which they are used. In the case of her own wedding, for example, moomin mugs seemed to have supported the overall relaxed atmosphere of its garden theme.

What also comes out from Elli’s citation is that she had borrowed moomin mugs from her mother and from her husband’s mother. This seems to indicate that even though her own moomin mug collection wasn’t big enough to serve all of the guests, it was clearly important to her to have moomin mugs in her wedding. Thus, instead of using other coffee cups, she was willing to borrow more moomin mugs from her immediate family. The importance of the moomin mugs to Elli, can be seen to stem from the way they represent an important part of her everyday life. Earlier in her interview, Elli had explained how she uses her moomin mugs every day, how they always bring a good feeling and how they have emotional value to her. Based on this it can be interpreted that it was important to her to bring this important and familiar part of her everyday life to her special life event.

In addition to universal events such as weddings or birthday parties, two of the informants brought out self-created events, in which moomin mugs were an integral part of. Similar to the research of Rook (1985), the use of certain moomin mugs in these events seemed to be ritualistic, as it was always repeated at the time of the event. The other one of these informants, for example, explained how he had used his fishing themed moomin mug only in those mornings, when he was planning to go fishing.

“I have received one mug as a gift. It is the black Moominpappa mug. It has a fishing theme and I received it as a gift in 2005 or something like that and because fishing is important to me, it was for a long time that I only drank from

that mug in those mornings, when I was planning to go fishing. It was quite funny actually.” (Jarkko)

Based on Jarkko’s citation, his previous way to use the fishing themed moomin mug was clearly connected to his fishing plans. Consequently, the use of the moomin mug appeared to form a ritual, which Jarkko performed only in those mornings when he was planning to go fishing. As fishing is clearly important to him, it can be interpreted that this ritual symbolized the specialness and importance of his beloved hobby. The reason for him to use specifically the Moominpappa mug, on the other hand, can be seen to relate to the way its fishing theme reflects his fishing hobby as well as to the way it was received as a gift. It can be interpreted that these two features make the moomin mug special and consequently suitable for the ritual.

In addition to Jarkko, also Maria talked about this type of ritualistic moomin mug usage. In her case a Fillyjonk mug was used as a symbol for a cleaning day.

“Well, for example, if it’s a cleaning day then I always, and everybody laughs at me, when I do so, take a Fillyjonk mug.” (Maria)

Similar to Jarkko, Maria explained how she has a certain moomin mug, which she uses on those days, when she is going to clean the house. This specific mug has a picture of Fillyjonk, which character loves cleanliness and is very organized by nature. Consequently, it can be interpreted that the reason for Maria to use the Fillyjonk mug on a cleaning day, comes from the way it relates to the cleaning activity. Because of this connection, it can be interpreted that Maria wants to use the Fillyjonk mug, because it helps her to get into the right mood on these occasions.

On the other hand, what also comes out from the citation is that Maria’s family has noticed her ritual and they seem to find it amusing. Based on this, the Fillyjonk mug might also work as a way for Maria to playfully communicate her cleaning plans to her family.

4.2.6 Non-usage

Even though moomin mugs were seen as usable objects by the informants, Moomin mug collections could also include items which were not used. However, unlike assemblages of Woodward and Greasley (2017), these mugs were not unused because of the way they had become forgotten or useless over time. Instead, they were kept unused due to the conscious decision of their owner. This decision was typically made because of the value and the rarity of the moomin mug. For example, Niina explained how she had excluded her Moomin's day mug from being used because of its value.

Niina: "... I have not used the Moomin's day mug. That one I have not used even once. That is the mug that I still protect from use. But maybe one day."

Interviewer: "What makes you to protect it from usage?"

Niina: "It's probably because it's more valuable. If it becomes broken, I would not have it anymore. That's what I fear. I fear that then I would not be able to get it anymore or that I would have to pay an arm and a leg to get a new one."

The Moomin's day mug that Niina talked about is a special mug, which was sold only in selected stores on Moomin's day in 2018. Niina brought out how she doesn't want to use the mug, because it is valuable. This value seems to relate to its monetary value as she fears that if the mug becomes broken, she would have to pay lots of money in order to get a new one. In addition, she also fears that it would be difficult for her to find a new mug to replace it, which indicates the rarity of the mug. Consequently, it appears that Niina protects her mug from being used, in order to ensure that it stays in her collection. However, this protection doesn't seem to be unconditional as she mentions in the citation how the mug could be in use one day. This seems to indicate that her logic can be open for change in the future.

In addition to the value and the rarity, moomin mugs could remain unused due to their aesthetic appearance. An informant who talked about this logic in his interview was Jarkko.

Jarkko: “This one has still a sticker on it. When I bought it in the fall, my wife said that lets not remove the sticker from this mug and because of that I didn’t remove it.”

Interviewer: “Why didn’t she want the sticker to be removed?”

Jarkko: “Well I don’t know. She doesn’t really like this mug and that’s why she probably didn’t want to take it in use... She doesn’t like the colors of the mug.”

It comes out from the citation that Jarkko’s wife doesn’t see the Moomin mug as aesthetically appealing, which is why Jarkko has not taken it in use. In addition, he has not removed the stickers of the mug, which can be seen to work as an indicator for its exclusion from usage. As Jarkko explained in his interview that he is aiming to collect all of the different moomin mugs, it can be interpreted that it doesn’t matter to him, whether or not all of the mugs in the collection are aesthetically beautiful. However, what comes to using the mugs of the collection, their aesthetic features can affect his decision to exclude them from being in use.

An interesting exception to the informants who had only singular Moomin mugs that were not in use, was Emma, who had clearly separated her collection into two parts: to those that are in use and those that are not in use.

Emma: “Special mugs and seasonal mugs are not in use. At least for now. And then I have those basic character mugs, which are in use.”

Interviewer: “How do these mugs differ from each other?”

Emma: “These seasonal mugs are launched either in spring or fall and these special mugs are sold only at a certain time and only a certain number of mugs is sold. These basic character mugs, on the other hand, are sold all the time despite the season of the year. Their sale is not limited to a certain day or event. “

As Emma explained in the citation, special mugs and seasonal mugs, which she keeps unused, are always sold only for a certain period of time. Consequently, they can be understood to be rarer and more expensive compared to “the basic character mugs”, which

are sold all the time. This indicates that Emma has separated her mugs based on their value and rarity and decided to use only those mugs that are cheaper and easier to get.

This separation of the mugs was clearly visible in her home. Those mugs that were in use, were located in the kitchen and they were kept in a basic glass-door cabinet. The special mugs and seasonal mugs, on the other hand, were kept in a fancier cabinet, which had lights and a central location in her living room. The appearance of these cabinets as well as their location in the house, seemed to reflect the different status of her moomin mugs. The basic cabinet reflected the ordinariness of the basic mugs as well as their in-use status, as it was located in the kitchen. The fancier cabinet, on the other hand, reflected the specialness of the special and seasonal mugs, and its location in the living room indicated that they are not used. This division between used and unused of Emma's moomin mugs can be seen to be similar to the separation of sacred and mundane in the research of Belk et al (1989).

In addition to the things mentioned above, an interesting detail in Emma's citation, is the way she mentions that her special and seasonal mugs are not in use, at least for now. Similar to Niina, this seems to indicate that the separation of the special and seasonal mugs from use is not unconditional, but potentially open for change.

4.3 Negotiation of logics of usage

An interesting finding that came up from the interviews, is that the logics of usage of moomin mug collections were not static. Same mugs were used in different ways depending on the situation. This came out, for example, from Elli's citation:

Interviewer: "It has already come out that you use these moomin mugs. In which situations do you use them?"

Elli: "From morning breakfast table to our friends' visits and to our wedding. They are used in every moment."

Interviewer: "Which mugs are suitable for which situation?"

Elli: "There is no difference in that."

Elli mentions different logics of usage in her citation: her mugs can be used based on the logic of everyday usage (breakfast table), socially-based usage (friends visits), and event-based usage (wedding). This indicates that her collection is not used statically only based on one logic, but that the items of her collection can be, instead, used based on different logics depending on the situation. In addition, based on her citation there is no difference in which logics apply to which mugs. This indicates that all of the mugs of her collection are open for different logics.

Based on the interviews, the negation of logics happened even between the logic of non-usage and the other logics (hints of this was already seen under non-usage subtitle). This means that it was identified that the status of the moomin mugs could turn from used to unused as well as from unused to used. These changes were seen to happen through rotation and sporadic transition, which are further explained below.

4.3.1 Rotation

Many of the informants explained how they rotate their moomin mugs so that all of them are not in use at the same time. The most common way to do this was by changing the order of the moomin mugs in their cabinet. This rotation was typically related to the seasonal usage of the moomin mugs (see also seasonal usage) so that the place of the mugs in the cabinet was changed based on the season of the year. One of the informants to talk about this practice was Paula.

"...in the beginning of December, when the Christmas time comes, I move all of these winter moomin mugs to the lower shelf and we use them until the end of February. After that I move them back in the back of the cabinet and we start using the newer production again." (Paula)

Paula brings out how she moves the winter moomin mugs on a lower shelf in the beginning of December to indicate that they are in use. After February she starts using newer moomin mugs, which is why she then moves the winter moomin mugs in the back of the cabinet and replaces them with newer moomin mugs. Based on this Paula seems to indicate the in-use versus not-in-use status of the mugs by changing their place in the cabinet. Their location on

the lower shelf indicates that the mugs are in use and when they are moved in the back of the cabinet it means that they are currently not in use.

Figure 4

Jarkko's moomin mugs in the kitchen cabinet and in the showcase



NOTE: Moomin mugs that are in use are kept on the right side of the middle rack in the kitchen cabinet. Some of the moomin mugs that were in-use at the time of taking the picture, were also in the dishwasher or on the kitchen counter. (left); Moomin mugs that are not in use at the time, are kept in the showcase (right).

In addition to changing the place of the mugs in the cabinet, two of the informants explained how they rotate their moomin mugs between a showcase and a kitchen cabinet (see figure 4). Jarkko talks about this practice in the following citation.

Jarkko: "We just go to the showcase with my wife and we try to think, which mugs would be nice at the moment. Then we take twelve mugs in use and then those mugs that are in the kitchen cabinet go back to the showcase after they are washed."

Interviewer: "How long do the mugs stay in the kitchen cabinet?"

Jarkko: “Maybe two or three weeks. But it’s not so accurate. If I, for example, sit on the sofa and I look at the showcase and I see a mug that looks good, I can take it in use.”

As it comes out from the citation, Jarkko has a clear pattern for the rotation of the moomin mugs. Twelve mugs are always located in the kitchen cabinet and they are chosen based on what Jarkko and his wife want to use at the time. The mugs typically stay in use for two to three weeks after which they are washed and put back in the showcase. After that they are again replaced with other twelve moomin mugs.

Based on this rotation it can be interpreted that the location of the mugs in the kitchen cabinet indicates that they are in use. Their location in the showcase, on the other hand, shows that they are in a not-in-use mode. However, despite this clear division, it comes out from the citation, how the practice of rotating the moomin mugs is not strict. If Jarkko sees a moomin mug in the showcase, which looks nice at the time, he can take it in use. This behavior can be seen to have similarities with the findings of Woodward and Greasley (2017), which brought out how pieces of clothing collections can end up being used because of the way they “called out” for their owner.

On the other hand, the practice of rotating the moomin mugs itself can be interpreted as a way for Jarkko to manage his large collection. He had earlier kept his moomin mugs in the kitchen cabinet, but after it had become too small for them, he had put them on display in the showcase. It can be interpreted that the rotation of the moomin mugs makes it possible for Jarkko to keep a reasonable number of moomin mugs in use as well as to admire the rest of them from the showcase at the same time. On the other hand, in addition of making the use and the viewing of the collection easier, the rotation of the mugs can also be interpreted as a way to bring joy and variety to everyday life. Jarkko explained, for example, how he can become delighted, when using a moomin mug, which he has not used for a while.

“And because we always change a new set of mugs into use it is very delightful to use something when you realize that ah yes, I also have this in here. And somehow you can always find new details from them and sometimes even become surprised like oh wow, it has also this kind of thing. It’s kind of funny, because you think that you already know all of their design.” (Jarkko)

It comes out from Jarkko's citation how he enjoys the practice of rotating his moomin mugs. The reason for this seems to be the way it makes it possible to use different mugs from his collection and to find again those mugs, which he has not used for a while. The way Jarkko enjoys the reconsumption of his mugs is similar to the findings of Russel and Levy (2012), who brought out how consumers can reconsume objects because of their ability to awake intense emotions time after time. Based on their research the reconsumption of objects helps consumers also to form a richer understanding of the consumption objects. This was clearly the case with Jarkko as he explained how he can always find new details from the design of his moomin mugs. On the whole it can be interpreted that the rotation of the mugs makes the usage of moomin mugs more enjoyable for Jarkko.

4.3.2 Sporadic transition from unused to used

In addition to the rotation of the moomin mugs, it came out from Niina's interview, how collections can also experience a more permanent and radical transition between in-use and not-in-use status. In her interview, Niina brought out how she used to protect her collection from being used but had eventually change her stance.

“When I started to have rarer mugs, I thought entirely so that I keep these unused. I thought that I won't remove the stickers or anything...But then one time I just started thinking that why on earth do I store these. These are meant to be used. Even though I collect these and it's nice to keep these clean, especially the rarest ones, I just thought that it doesn't make sense to just let them get dusty in the cabinet. Because of that I eventually took all of them in use. The only mug which I still protect from usage is the Moomin's day mug”
(Niina)

It comes out from Niina's citation how she had changed her mind related to her moomin mug collection. First, she wanted to protect the collection from the everyday world, similar way as collectors described in the research of Belk et al (1989). She, for example, kept the stickers of the mugs untouched, which can be interpreted as a way to maintain their value as collectibles. However, at some point her collection experienced a sporadic shift from unused to used, as she had started to think that it is not rational to keep the mugs unused, because

they would just become dusty in the cabinet. It can be interpreted that she started to think that the mugs could be more useful to her, if she stops storing them in the cabinet and takes them into use. The only exception was the Moomin's day mug, which reason was explained under the logic of non-usage.

In addition, what also comes out from Niina's extract is that even though the moomin mugs were taken into use, she still sees them as a collection. This comes out from the end of her extract, where she mentions how she likes to collect the mugs. This indicates that she still identifies herself as a collector and her mugs as a collection, even though the mugs were taken into use.

4.4 The use of broken moomin mugs

Based on the findings, some the informants were also seen to keep those moomin mugs which had become broken either in use or for some other reason. Consequently, the broken moomin mugs were not necessarily disposed (Roster 2001) or moved into a garage, as was the case for many possessions in the research of Hirschman et al (2012). Instead, they were often used in creative ways for new purposes. These mugs were used, for example, as flowerpots or as places in which to keep toothbrushes, pens or other things. Pieces of the mugs, on the other hand, were used as decorations, jewels, or magnets. Examples of the new purposes can be found from figure 5.

It can be interpreted that the new purposes of the broken moomin mugs represent ways to bring joy and beauty into everyday activities. For example, keeping one's toothbrushes in a colorful broken moomin mug can awake happy feelings in the viewer as well as make the everyday task of brushing one's teeth feel more special. On the other hand, the practice of keeping the broken mugs itself, seems to indicate the importance of the moomin mugs. This is because instead of throwing them away, their owners are willing to create a new purpose for them in order to keep them as part of their everyday life. Consequently, it appears that moomin mugs hold more value to their owners than merely their practical value.

Figure 5

Examples of the new purposes of broken moomin mugs



NOTE: first row: a cracked moomin mug used as a flowerpot (left); a moomin mug without a handle used as a place for pens (middle), pieces of moomin mugs used as decorations in a flowerpot (right). Second row: moomin mugs without a handle used as places for toothbrushes (left), a jewel that is made from a piece of broken moomin mug (right).

Based on the interviews, for some people creating new purposes for broken moomin mugs seemed to be a hobby. For example, Minna explained how she had become interested in this activity because of her friend.

“I got excited about moomin jewelries after I saw my friends Facebook post in which she had made jewelry of broken moomin mugs and dishes... She told me that she makes them by using a glass grinding machine and I thought that I also want to try so I bought myself a glass grinding machine from Tori.fi...I have collected the material from friends and from trash pallet group and where ever I happen to get the material. The word has spread pretty well so that people know that also broken moomin dishes are wanted possessions. Consequently, people don’t necessarily throw them away anymore” (Minna)

Based on Minna's interview, her overall interest in moomin mugs and handicrafts was a reason why she had got excited also about moomin crafts. Earlier in her interview she had explained, for example, how she enjoys sewing and doing all kinds of handicrafts, which can be seen to be the reason for her to try moomin crafts as well. In the citation she explains how she has acquired material for her moomin handicrafts from others and mentions how people have become aware that also the broken moomin mugs are wanted objects. This seems to indicate that Minna and her friend are not the only ones who have become interested in utilizing also the broken moomin dishes, but that it has become a well-known phenomenon among moomin mug owners.

In addition to using broken moomin mugs for new purposes, couple of the informants mentioned how they had fixed a broken moomin mug and kept it in the collection. One of the informants to talk about this was Paula.

"...so that one we glued, because it was not possible to get it anymore. And we actually don't use it so actively anymore" (Paula)

The mug that Paula talks about had lost its handle. As the mug was not sold in the stores at the time of its breakage, she had decided to glue the handle back to its place. It can be interpreted that the reason for her to fix the mug relates to her will to keep it in her collection. Paula also mentions how her family doesn't use the mug so actively anymore. This can be seen as a way to prevent it from becoming completely broken, and consequently as a way to ensure that the mug stays in the collection.

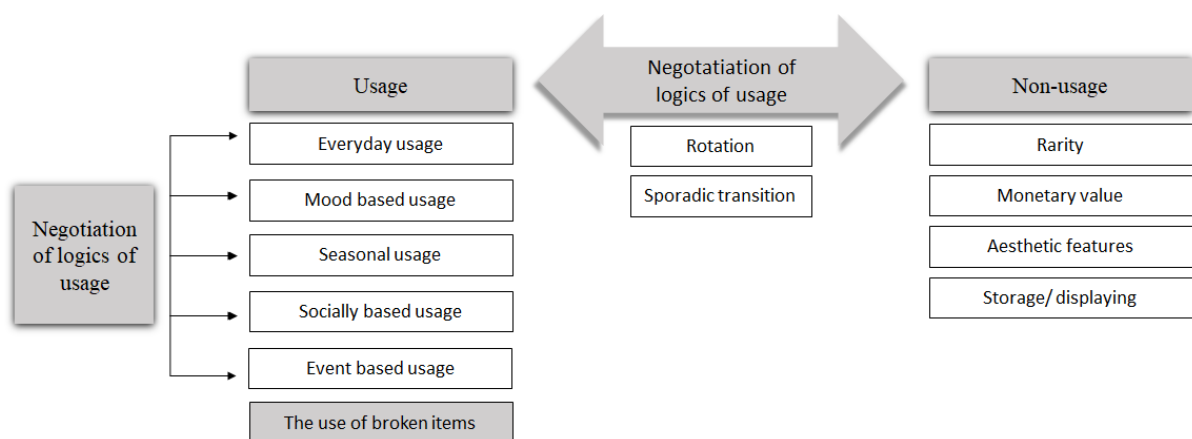
4.5 Summary of the findings

Based on the data it was recognized that all of the informants were using their collections. The logics that related to the usage were the following: everyday usage, mood-based usage, seasonal usage, socially based usage, event-based usage, and non-usage. What was found is that these logics are not static, but instead negotiated by the collectors. This means that different logics can apply to the same mugs depending on the situation. For example, same mug can be used in a wedding celebration (event-based usage) and next to cheer oneself up (mood-based usage), when drinking morning coffee.

Specific negotiation was seen to happen between the logic of non-usage and the other logics; in other words, between using and not using items of the collections. The identified reasons for not using certain items of the collections were the following: the known rarity, high monetary value, aesthetic features or collectible's state of being stored/displayed and thus waiting for its turn to be used. The last reason mentioned relates to rotation, which was the first recognized way of how consumers negotiate the logics of using versus not using certain items of their collections. In rotation collectors were seen to manage their collections by keeping a certain number of mugs in use and keeping the other mugs of the collection in the storage/displayed stage waiting to be used. In addition to rotation, sporadic transition was also recognized as a way how collections items can turn from unused to used. In sporadic transition the change from used to unused (and potentially also the other way around) happens sporadically through the decision of the collector. Based on the data, one of the informants was seen to change the status of the whole collection from unused to used through sporadic transition.

In addition to findings mentioned above, an interesting feature of informants' collections was that items that had due to usage or for some other reason become broken, were not necessarily disposed. Instead, they were either fixed or used for a totally new purpose by the collector. Broken moomin mugs or pieces of mugs were seen to be used as flowerpots, decorations, jewels, magnets, or as places in which to keep toothbrushes or pens.

Figure 6
Summary of the findings



The findings of this research are summarized in figure 6. The right side represents the logics related to usage of collected items and the negotiation between these logics. The left side represents the logic of non-usage and the reasons for removing certain items from usage. The two-way arrow in the middle represents the negotiation between usage and non-usage. As broken items were also seen to be used by the collectors (either as part of the collection or for new purposes) it is represented in the usage side of the figure.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to understand collections, which items remain in their functional purpose, by concentrating on the context of moomin mug collections. As moomin mug collections represent a significant phenomenon in Finland and as many of them are known to be used by their collectors, it was decided that the research would focus on this specific context. The research was conducted as a qualitative phenomenological research through semi-structured interviews and the research question that lead the study was the following: what are collections that are in use and how is the consumption experience of using a collection formed?

What was found from the data, is that moomin mug collections are in many ways typical collections, as they have similar features with collections described in the previous literature. This indicates that instead of being just sets of items, informants' moomin mugs formed clearly collections, even though their items remained in their original use. Based on the data, the consumption experience of using these collections was formed through different logics of usage, which were the following: everyday usage, mood-based usage, seasonal usage, event-based usage, socially based usage and non-usage. These logics were identified to be dynamic, as they were negotiated by the collectors. In addition, it was identified that also broken items of collections could be used either for their original purpose as part of the collection or for new purposes. The use of broken items was also understood to be important in forming the consumption experience of using moomin mug collections.

The findings of this research are next discussed further in the light of the existing theory. Despite some similarities, which prove that moomin mugs are collections and not just sets of items, some major differences between the existing theory of collections and the findings of this research were identified. These differences are related to the usage of collections, storing of collections, dynamicity of collections as well as to diversity of collections. These differences are summarized in table 2 and they are further discussed below in the light of existing theory. After this discussion theoretical implications, managerial implications, limitations of the study, as well as directions for future research are presented.

5.1 Broadening our understanding of collections

5.1.1 Use and storage of collections

As explained before, the existing literature of collections has for a long time seen collected items only as objects which are removed from their ordinary purpose once they are added into a collection (e.g. Belk et al 1989, Belk et al 1988, Belk 1995b, Long & Schiffman 1997, McKenzie et al 2015, Hughes & Hogg 2006, Spaid 2018, Slater 2000, Pearce 1994, Scaraboto et al 2017). The reason for this is understood to be the sacredness of collections, which makes their collectors to protect the collectibles from mundane everyday world (Belk et al 1989). Based on this view, sets of items which are used by their owners cannot be comprehended as collections (Belk 2001).

Table 2

Differences between the existing theory of collections and findings of the research

	Findings of this research	Existing theory of collections
Usage	Collected items can remain in their functional purpose and they can be used in different ways and situations.	Collected items are sacred and thus separated from their ordinary purpose. Therefore, they are not used.
Storage	Collections are not necessarily separated from mundane objects, as they can be stored in the same place with them. The storage place of the collectibles supports their usage.	Collections are separated from mundane world by storing them in a place that is specifically meant for them. This place supports their protection.
Diversity	Different kind of collections can exist in the continuum of used and not used collections.	Concentrates solely on collection that are not used. Other types of collections are not recognized.
Dynamicity	Collections can be dynamic.	Dynamicity of collections is not recognized.

In contrast to this widely accepted view of collectibles being separated from their functional purpose, the findings of this research show that items of a collection can remain in their functional use and that they can be utilized in multiple different ways and situations. This finding is also in contrast with the research of Scaraboto et al (2017), which brought out that

collections can “somewhat” remain in their functional purpose. According to the interviews of this research collected items can, instead, fully remain in their original use and through different logics of usage bring lot of joy and warmth to the everyday life of their collectors. Thus, the findings of this research show that also collections, which items are used, exist and similar to the findings of Woodward and Greasley (2017, 659) they can be “the site for everyday consumption practices”.

In addition to protecting collectibles from being used, the existing theory of collections explains how they are kept separate from the mundane world by keeping them in a place that is specifically meant for the collectibles. This place can be, for example, a glass-doored cabinet, which is like a shrine for the special collections and it has typically a central place in collector’s home. (Belk et al 1989) Unlike this widely accepted view of how collections are stored, the findings of this research showed that collections are not necessarily kept separate from mundane world, as they can be stored in the same place with other mundane objects. This came out from the way how most of the informants kept their moomin mug collections in their kitchen cabinet, similar way as the other mugs that they owned. Also, even if a moomin mug collection was seen to be stored separately in a glass-doored cabinet, certain number of mugs of the collection was always rotated to the kitchen cabinet for usage. As the special places, where sacred collections are stored, support their protection (Belk et al 1989), the location of moomin mugs in the kitchen, was seen to support the usage of the moomin mug collections.

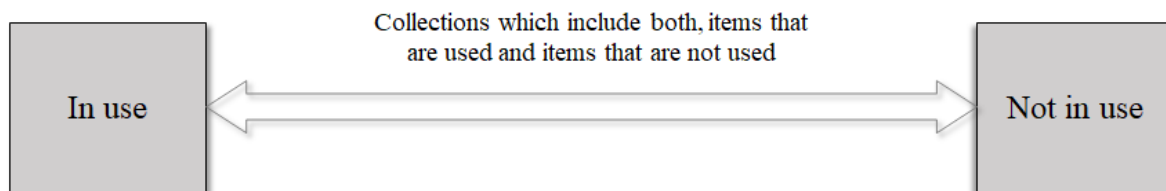
The discussion above shows that the existing theory of collections should recognize that not all collections are sacred and protected as also collections which items remain in use and which can be stored with mundane objects, exist.

5.1.2 Diversity of collections

The understanding of the diversity of collections has been very narrow in the previous studies about collections. This is because the existing literature has only recognized sacred collections, which items are protected from being used and consequently separated from the mundane world (e.g. Belk et al 1989, Belk 2001). In reality collections should, however, be viewed more broadly, as the findings of this research show that collections can also be used, and that even the used collections can vary from those in which all of the items are used (e.g.

Elli's collection, which was used also in her wedding) to those, where some singular items are protected from being used (e.g. Noora's collections, which items were used with the exception of her moomin's day mug). In addition to these types of collections, it was also identified that a collector can also clearly divide the items of a collection into those that are used and to those which are not used. This was the case with Emma, who also kept these different items of her collection in different cabinets.

Figure 7
Continuum of collections



Based on these findings, instead of only taking into account collections which are not used, the theory should also recognize other types of collections as well. One way to broaden the theory's perspective on different types of collections based on their usage, is to view their whole spectrum as a continuum (see figure 7). In this continuum the other end represents collections, which items are used and the other end collections which are not used (this end represents the theory formed in the existing literature). In between of these collections exist hybrid collections in which some items are used and some of them are protected from being used. This type of understanding of collections takes better into account the diversity of different collections and thus broadens the existing theory to better match the reality.

5.1.3 Dynamicity of collections

In addition of not recognizing diversity, the existing literature of sacred collections has not identified the dynamicity of collections. Instead, based on the existing studies, the status of collectibles is understood to remain the same after they are added into a collection; that is, they stay unused and protected (Belk et al 1989). The only dynamic feature that is recognized in the existing literature, is that on very special occasions items of a collection can shortly

become used with extreme caution (Belk 2001). Nevertheless, even by taking into account this exception, the existing literature can be seen to have comprehended the dynamicity of collections too narrowly.

The findings of this research, on the other hand, show that collections that are used can be very dynamic. This dynamicity was seen to have some similarities with clothing and CD assemblages studied in the research of Woodward and Greasley (2017), as moomin mug collections could also have items that are old and new and as the frequency of usage of the different items of the collections varied. Also, similar to the Melissa shoe collectors in Scaraboto's et al (2017) research, items of moomin mug collections could change their place in the house of their collector depending on whether they were stored, in use or whether they were waiting to be washed in the dishwasher or on a kitchen counter. Consequently, unlike sacred collections, the items of moomin mug collections didn't remain statically in the place in which they were stored, but could instead, dynamically change their place in the home of their collector.

In addition to the findings similar to the research of Woodward and Greasley (2017) and Scaraboto et al (2017), some previously unnoticed features of dynamicity were identified. First of all, moomin mug collections were understood to be dynamic in a way that their logics of usage were open for change. Items of these collections were understood to be used for multiple different purposes, for example, in a way that a certain mug can first be used casually for everyday coffee drinking and next for Christmas or wedding celebration. Consequently, the situations in which a certain mug was used could change.

On the other hand, the logics of being in use and not in use were seen to change through rotation and sporadic transition. As explained in the findings, some of the informants rotated the mugs between a kitchen cabinet and a showcase in a way that their location in the kitchen indicated that they are in use and their location in the showcase indicated that they were on display and thus currently not in use. In the case of sporadic transition, on the other hand, collections were seen to be dynamic in a way that their items can experience a more permanent and sporadic transition between used and not used. Lastly, the dynamicity of collections was seen in the way how items that had become broken were not necessarily thrown away (Roster 2001) but were instead used for new purposes or fixed and kept as part of a collection.

On the whole, as all of the things mentioned above show, collections should be understood to be dynamic and thus open for changes. Again, by taking into account the dynamicity of collections, the theory would have a more comprehensive understanding of collections.

5.2 Theoretical implications

The findings of this research have important implications to the theory of collections, as they show that our understanding of collections has been too narrow. The theory has previously concentrated only on sacred collections, which are removed from their ordinary functional purpose (e.g. Belk et al 1989, Danet & Katriel 1989) and it has thus neglected a wide range of collections which items are used by their collectors.

Based on the findings, this research broadens the theory of collections by including the following aspects: (1) not all collections are sacred and protected from being used. Instead, also the kind of collections exist, which items remain in their original purpose. These types of collections can be an integral part of their owner's life and bring a lot of joy to their everyday situations as well as special occasions. (2) Collections are not necessarily protected from the mundane world by storing them in a special place, as they can also be located in the same place with mundane objects. The chosen place was seen to support the usage of the collectibles. (3) Different kinds of collections exist in the continuum of used and unused collections and finally (4) collections that are used can be in many ways dynamic, ranging from the dynamicity of their logics of usage to creating new purposes for collectibles that have become broken. What has to be highlighted, is that these implications do not refute the findings of previous studies related to sacred collections. Instead, they build onto the existing knowledge of collections and show that the theory should broaden its view to take into account the wider spectrum of collections.

Even though the core focus of the study has been on collections, the results of this research can also be seen to broaden our understanding of consumers everyday consumption and brand relationships. First of all, this research shows how collections can be part of the everyday life of their owners in diverse ways. This is seen in the way they bring variety and joy to the everyday life of their collector and the way they can be used through various different logics in different situations. Also, the use of broken items showed how consumers

can find creative ways to bring joy and beauty into such ordinary situations as brushing one's teeth or decorating a flowerpot. On the whole, this research brings out how ordinary everyday situation (e.g. coffee drinking from a moomin mug) can contain interesting and diverse information about consumer's behavior and more specifically how collections can be part of the everyday life of their collectors.

Related to brand relationships the existing theory has recognized how consumers can become collectors of a certain brand and consequently be loyal to a certain company's products (Slater 2001). Slater (2000) has even brought up that collectors of a certain brand should be seen as the owners of the brand. As the previous literature has concentrated only on sacred collections, this research can also be seen to bring new information of the relationships that collectors form with the collected brands. The findings show that collectors' connection with a certain brand can appear in a form of frequent usage of the collectibles, which integrates them tightly into the everyday practices of the collector. In addition, collectors' love towards the brand can also be seen in the way even the broken items are kept and used for new purposes, instead of throwing them away (Roster 2001).

5.3 Managerial implications

The findings of this research provide valuable information about the diversity of consumers' collections, which companies producing collectibles can utilize in their business. It is next explained how the results of this research can be used when developing company's offering and communication. What has to be taken into account, however, is that the things mentioned below are only meant for examples that companies can consider, when targeting collectors. Suitable actions can only be taken by truly considering the situation of the company and its customers.

Offering: the knowledge of whether collectibles produced by a company are used or protected from being used should be taken into consideration when developing new products that are targeted towards collectors. This is because this specific knowledge of customers can help companies to create collectibles that better match the needs of their customers and which are consequently able to create better value to them.

For example, if most of the company's customers are known to use their collections, it is important that the company is familiar with the logics of usage that are related to the collectibles. Based on the results of this research, things such as durability of collectibles, seasonality, as well as suitability for different situations, seemed to be important features to collectors. These aspects can represent features that a company producing collectibles that are used could consider, in case they are applicable to its products. On the other hand, if collectors are known to protect their collections, the company in question could take this information in account, for example, by offering customers means for the protection and maintenance of their collections.

Communication: The knowledge of how companies' customers treat their collections can also be utilized in company's communication. What came out from moomin mug collections is, for example, that they can be used in different events as in birthday parties or during Christmas celebration and that the season of the year or the mood of the collector can affect, which mug he or she is going to use. Thus, seasonality, different ways how to use collections, as well as durability could potentially be things that companies can take into account, when creating creative marketing efforts that are targeted towards collectors that are known to use their collections.

On the other hand, different kind of communication can better speak to customers, which protect their collections from usage. For example, content that includes the aspects of protection and the maintenance of the collectibles can work better for these types of collectors. On the whole, by understanding different types of collectors and by taking into account the special features of their collections, companies can be able to create content that is better targeted towards these different customers.

Also related to communication, firms could create more value to their customers by providing specific information of the collected items. Things like prices of the items, year of their publication/production, overall listing of all of the items produced, how to keep the collectibles in good condition as well as ideas for how to store or use them seemed to be at the interest of collectors in the light of the data of this research. Consequently, creation of a blog concentrating specifically on these types of issues or sharing this type of information on a certain social media channel of the company, could support the collection process of the firm's customers and thus produce additional value to them.

In addition, companies could also support the information sharing between collectors as well as between collectors and the company itself. Based on the researches of Slater (2000) and Belk (1991) collectors are typically interested in joining collector clubs in order to get in touch with other collectors as well as eager to share their ideas and thoughts related to the collectibles with the company producing them. Consequently, hosting events in which collectors of the company's items can meet each other and share their thoughts and ideas as well as providing them with a channel to get in touch with the company, can be examples of how a company can tighten and prolong its customers' relationships with the company's products.

5.4 Limitations of the study

Due to the qualitative research approach of this study, one of its important limitations is its subjective nature. This means that all of the interpretations that are made of the data are formed through the researcher's own perceptions, which is why there is always a risk of over analyzing and making false interpretation. However, in order to mitigate the risk, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and they were read through multiple times, in order to ensure sufficient objectivity and accurate description of the data. In addition, the whole process of analyzing the data was conducted in an iterative way and the created themes were viewed critically, in order to avoid the mentioned risks.

Another limitation of the research relates to its results' generalizability. Even though similar kind of findings can be expected to be found from other collections that are used, one has to take into account that the findings of this research are highly dependent on the special characteristics of its context. What has to be taken into account, on the other hand, is that as the research was conducted as a qualitative phenomenological research, the whole purpose of the study was not to find generalizable results, but instead to form a deep understanding of the experiences and descriptions of the small number of informants that were at the focus of this study.

In addition to the things mentioned above, another limitation of the study relates to the interviews conducted. As two of them were conducted via phone, one could argue that the

understanding gained from these informants' collections is not as thorough as it is related to those collections that the researcher was able to view during the interview. However, in order to ensure deep enough understanding of these two collections, the informants were asked to send pictures of their collection to the researcher. In addition, at the time of the phone interview, the informants were asked to stay close to their collection, in order for them to better remember details related to their collections when answering the interview questions.

Finally, the research can be seen to have limitations related to the gender division of the informants, as only two of the interviewees were men. Because of this, the data analyzed in the research represents better the experiences of women collectors compared to men collectors. However, as described in the methodology section, this gender division was seen to reflect well the gender distribution of moomin mug collectors in the moomin mug related Facebook groups. Thus, the data gathered from the informants was understood to give a realistic view of the phenomenon of collections that are used.

5.5 Directions for future research

As the research at hand represents the first study concentrating on collections, which items are used, more research is required in order to form a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. An interesting aspect to study in the light of this research would be, for example, the boundary conditions of when sets of items become comprehended as collections that are used as well as whether the logics of usage change after the collected items are understood as collections. One quantitative study has been conducted related to the tipping point of when the act of collecting actually starts (Gao et al 2014), but more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the boundaries between sets of items and collections is needed.

Also, a study concentrating on a new unexplored context could bring out new insights of collections which items remain in use. One such context is sneaker collecting, which has become popular all around the world (Vainio 2018). For example, the creative ways how sneaker collectors take care of their shoes after usage (YouTube contains lots of videos about different hacks e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80d05YLgXV8>), the storage

solutions of sneakers (there are also a lot of videos about ways to store Sneakers on Youtube e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bHbQOxQWq34>) as well as their existence in the framework of highly symbolic clothing consumption (Woodruffe-Burton, 1998) form an interesting avenue, which could bring us new insights of collections that are used.

In addition to further broadening our understanding of collections, a context that can in general contain a lot of interesting aspects for further research are moomins, which represented the context of this research. These beloved characters have a long history in Finland and their popularity doesn't seem to show any marks of decline. Many thesis works have been conducted by using moomins as context, but research that examines the moomin phenomenon specifically through the lens of consumer culture, seems to be lacking. For example, due to the long history of moomins in Finland it would be interesting to study what kind of meanings Finnish consumers relate to the moomin brand and overall what kind of brand relationships Finnish consumers have with moomins.

Finally, this study encourages researchers also to concentrate on mundane everyday consumption. According to Kravets (2011) consumer researchers have for a long time concentrated only on special and extraordinary phenomenon and shunned mundane contexts. This is interesting, given that most of consumers' consumption can be seen to happen in everyday situations. As the results of this research show, consumption experiences created in the everyday context can contain interesting aspects of consumer behavior. Consequently, everyday consumption should not be neglected, as it can provide new interesting insights from the lives of consumers.

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